

CURRENT TOPICS

AN IMPRESSIVE SCENE TOOK PLACE RECENTLY in a jury room in Chicago. Patrick Deehan was on trial for murder and when the jury retired for deliberation the foreman, William H. Dietz, suggested to his fellow jurors that they kneel in prayer and ask for divine guidance. The suggestion was adopted and Foreman Dietz led his fellow jurors in prayer. The verdict of the jury was not guilty. To a newspaper reporter Foreman Dietz said: "I felt before we could do anything in the matter of taking a vote on Deehan's guilt or innocence that personally I needed wisdom. God has said to us when we needed wisdom that we should pray for it. I felt that the Holy Spirit should be my guide in this matter because of the evidence we had heard. I therefore asked my brother jurors to kneel down and ask God for wisdom—that we might look to Him for guidance. I believed that every juror knew there was a God, though there were many denominations represented. At my request not one refused to kneel."

ONE MEMBER OF THE JURY, REFERRING to the incident, said: "We were surprised when Foreman Dietz asked us to kneel with him in prayer, but I thought it right, and followed him in my heart. I was praying myself in my own words, but as I remember his words they were: 'Our Heavenly Father, we pray to Thee for guidance in this act we are about to commit in deciding the fate of the defendant. We ask Thee on our bended knees to guide us in our deliberations, that justice may be done. We ask Thee to guide us by Thine omnipotent power in our deliberations and give us the wisdom to decide between right and wrong, for Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory for ever and ever. Amen.'" It is related that the defendant showed no emotion nor offered to thank the jurors when the verdict was rendered. Later, however, on being told that the jurors knelt in prayer before entering upon their deliberations, the defendant said: "I did not know that. I am not a praying man, nor even a Christian, but I am deeply thankful to the jurors, especially Mr. Dietz, for the result of their prayer if it led them to believing me not guilty. I am not guilty of murder. I hope their prayer will do more for me—that it will lead me to the same God that Mr. Dietz worships."

THE WASHING OF THE FACE OF THE great Westminster clock was thought to be of sufficient importance to justify a London cablegram to the Chicago Record-Herald. It is related that this is the first time that the face of this clock, known as "Big Ben," has been washed in fifteen years. A statement more interesting than that relating to this clock's bath is the description contained in this London cablegram: "The Big Ben tower which holds aloft Britain's greatest clock gets its popular name from the hour bell, which weighs 13 tons 11 hundredweight. The hammer for the bell weighs 4 hundredweight, while the quarter bells weigh 78, 33½, 26 and 21 hundredweight respectively. The pendulum is just over thirteen feet long and weighs nearly 700 pounds. The dials of the clock are 22½ feet in diameter. The hour fingers are 2 feet long and the minute spaces 1 foot square. The minute hands are 11 feet long. They are tubular and made of copper. The operation of winding is performed by two men and means several hours' hard work. Big Ben's trustworthiness in keeping time has become proverbial with the Londoner, who hears the boom far away over the city, according to the direction of the wind. From first to last the clocks and bells cost about \$110,000."

ALONDON MERCHANT HAS ADOPTED A novel plan of dealing with women kleptomaniacs. When a woman is detected in the act of shop-lifting, she is given the privilege of choosing between prosecution in court or a very vigorous birching. A strong woman is detailed to apply the rod. Referring to this plan, the London Truth says: "In one shop alone twenty women have accepted the ordeal of birching, in addition to two young girls of foreign nationality, who, in consideration for their tender years, were treated to a milder form of chastisement."

THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE AWARD OF the first two scholarships in Oxford university granted under the terms of the Cecil Rhodes will, is made in a London cablegram to the Chicago Chronicle. These scholarships have been awarded by the government of Rhodesia and it is said that "both go to Catholics, students at the Jesuit college in Bulawayo. In his letter announcing the nominations Earl Grey pays a high tribute to the importance of the work the Jesuit fathers have done in Rhodesia among both whites and blacks."

THE SOUTH AFRICAN MISSION OF JOSEPH Chamberlain is said to have been a failure. Referring to Mr. Chamberlain's visit, the London correspondent of the Chicago Chronicle says: "He has settled nothing, but has been badly worsted by the Rand magnates over the war contribution. That contribution of \$150,000,000—less than half what the public had expected it to be—is outweighed by the loan to be made by the imperial government to the new colonies and it is made conditional on Mr. Chamberlain's giving the mining companies a free hand in 'crimping' black labor for the mines. That he could not consent to flatly, so he adopted the device of appointing a royal commission of mining magnates and their friends to fix the terms upon which native labor may be impressed. Mr. Chamberlain has fallen so completely under the influence of Lord Milner, the British high commissioner in South Africa, and of the Rand party, that his visit has further antagonized the Boers instead of conciliating them."

DURING THE YEAR 1902, 500,000 IMMIGRANTS arrived at New York. This was an increase of 138,000 over 1901. During 1902, 5,516 immigrants were denied admission to this country. The number who were turned back in 1901 amounted to 3,646.

A BILL WAS RECENTLY INTRODUCED IN the Massachusetts legislature "to provide for the better care, preservation, and development of the denture of minor inmates of the public institutions of the commonwealth." The bill is supported by the Associated Charities organization and by the state dentists' society. It is stated by the champions of this measure that "poor teeth cause indigestion and irritability of the stomach causing a craving for stimulants, and stimulants cause crime." The Chicago Tribune, commenting upon this measure, is unkind enough to say that "perhaps, after all, it is not so much the good of humanity as a handsome job the dentists have in view."

EXTREME DESTITUTION PREVAILS IN northern Sweden. The Gellivare, North Sweden, correspondent of the Chicago Tribune says: "Here in this desolate, frozen region thousands of human beings are face to face with actual starvation. Seventy thousand persons are living on less than famine rations. If relief supplies should slacken even temporarily thousands would die of hunger. There are in this district 500,000 head of cattle, horses, and sheep. These animals could, of course, be slaughtered for food, but with the live stock gone the condition of the people would be hopeless for years to come. It is estimated that \$1,000,000 will be needed to keep the people alive until the new harvest is reaped next August, and to purchase seed for the spring planting. The Swedish government is facing the problem resolutely and will buy and import seed if enough can be found raised far enough north in America to ripen in the high altitudes of Sweden."

THE POSTMASTER OF CHICAGO WAS RECENTLY visited by a young woman who said that she wanted to make a payment to the post-office department. This woman explained: "Three years ago I sent a dollar bill to Sweden. I did not have much money then, so I thought I would save something by wrapping the bill in a newspaper instead of sending it in a letter. I did not think it was wrong then. But my conscience has troubled me many times since then, and as I am now a good Christian I want to return what I cheated the government out of." The postmaster declined

to accept the conscience money, saying that he was not authorized to receive such a fund and that the payment of the small amount would put the government to great expense for clerical services in making the record.

PHIL SHERIDAN ONCE HAD SOMETHING to do with a coal famine. It was during the days following the great Chicago fire. The public committee on fuel discovered that coal dealers were giving short weight and in this way increasing their profits. The chairman of the committee issued an order providing that coal wagons should be weighed before leaving the coal yards by agents of the aid and relief association. The coal dealers refused to accede to the proposition. It is said that rather than comply they would refuse to deliver any coal whatever. General Sheridan attended the meeting of the relief association. Mr. Prosser, the chairman of the fuel committee, made a statement and he was asked by Henry W. King, president of the association, what course should be adopted. Mr. Prosser said: "If I were General Sheridan I should be able to tell you mighty quick what should be done." General Sheridan asked: "What's that which ought to be done?" Mr. Prosser replied: "I would declare martial law, take possession of all coal in cars and seize every deposit of coal in Chicago." General Sheridan declared: "I'll do it." The city was placed under martial law and Sheridan issued an order directing the troops to take possession of all coal supplies. Before this order was carried into effect, however, coal dealers complied with the rules issued by the aid and relief association.

PERHAPS THE SMALLEST REAL ESTATE deal on record is reported from Minneapolis. The owners of the Donaldson Glass block purchased a strip of land 120 feet long and but three inches wide. Consideration was \$500.

AN INTERESTING DESCRIPTION OF A PECULIAR statue is given to the Chicago Inter-Ocean by its Hackensack, N. J., correspondent. It is said that the old burying ground at Hackensack contains what is undoubtedly one of the most unique monuments in the world. Instead of having the conventional urn or cross, it is surmounted by toys finished in marble. The toys on the top of the monument are not ordinary toys. They are the reproduction in stone of the playthings of the child that now lies beneath the stone. By means of delicate chiseling, the sculptor has wrought out of a solid block of granite a little toy horse and a wheelbarrow filled with blocks. In raised letters above these stone toys are the words, "Bertie's Jim Horse." Although the little boy who once played with his pony and wheelbarrow died nearly a quarter of a century ago, the elements have made little impression upon his playthings. The saddle cloth, the tasseled bits, and the embroidered straps of the "Jim horse," the tiny stone spokes of the wheels supporting the pony, are all still preserved. The blocks packed carefully in the wheelbarrow still show distinctly their Roman numerals. In the central slab of the tomb the sculptor records that the child was named Albert Romeyn Harris, who died a few months before his fifth birthday.

ONE OF THE MOST PECULIAR STRUCTURES is the Flatiron building at Twenty-third and Broadway, New York city. This building derives its name from the fact that in shape it resembles a flatiron. Because of the peculiar form of this building the wind has had the habit of playing many pranks around it. The New York Tribune says that Gibson N. Vincent, a merchant at 940 Broadway, has brought suit against the owners of the building for \$5,000 damages. In his bill of complaint Mr. Vincent says: "That the said 'Flatiron' building, by reason of its extremely peculiar and unusual shape and form of construction, is a public and private nuisance, in that when the wind blows from a certain northeasterly direction against the high easterly wall of the building last aforesaid such wind is diverted from its natural course and is deflected with great force and violence . . . whereby pedestrians walking along Broadway and on and along said Twenty-second and Twenty-third streets are thrown with great violence to the pavement, and whereby the